

## **The Fake Boyfriend** by orphan\_account

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**Summary:**

Jane Ives is about to do something controversial. She needs to take the spotlight away from it. She decides to create a fake relationship.

## 1. The Interview and The Waiver

### Author's Note:

This will be reminiscent of "Their Touches" and "The Pretend Girlfriend."

You can think of it is a non-related sequel to both. If that helps :)

"How would you like to make money from using your looks?" Nancy asked her brother.

"I'd prefer to make money from using my brain."

"Ok, seeing as how you're a little asshole and that will never happen, what about your only real option?"

"Ha ha, Nancy, so funny I forgot to laugh."

She handed him a sheet of paper.

"Nice, whose bank account is that from?" Mike asked.

"It could be yours, that's just what they will pay you just for the interview. To see if you and Miss Ives click. If not, it's yours. Look down a little farther. That's your weekly pay, guaranteed for a year. If you get dumped then, that last number is your termination amount."

"Whoa, did you say Miss Ives... as in Jane Ives?"

“Yeah, you know who she is?”

“She was on that show, she was like eleven or something when she started, she was good too, pretty eyes, very believable character. I stopped watching when the third season was over. The producers or directors or writers, maybe even the actors, completely forgot who their characters were. They went for special effects... got stupid. Anyway, I think she’s like eighteen now, does modeling or something... just another actress... what... does she want someone to carry around her baggage or something? Or something even lower?”

“I don’t know the details, a friend of a friend’s boyfriend’s second cousin knew someone a few years ago whose mother’s daughter does her nails... something like that. Rumour has it there is a controversy about to happen with her and they want something to lessen the impact for a few news cycles. They want someone who lives in a town nobody has ever heard of or where nothing ever happens. Who knows, you could put Hawkins on the map.”

“Yeah what can I do... you know with my looks?” Mike laughed. “I feel famous already.”

“You Mike Wheeler are going to be her fake boyfriend.”

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Mike had laughed hard for almost half an hour, tears would run down his face, they’d dry up, as his laughing subsided but then restart all over again.

When he finally had control over himself he gave his big sister a warm hug. “Thanks Nancy, it’s been a long time since I’ve laughed that hard. It felt very good.”

“Ok, now that you have that out of your system, you have... ooh, down to forty-seven minutes to make up your mind.”

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Mike scoured the internet, learning everything there was to know about Jane Ives. For a celebrity she was conducting herself with style and grace. A few blips here and there, but some of those reports looked like they were embellished. For the most part she seemed like a really nice person.

And that was when Mike first felt it. Kind of a longing from his heart that worked itself into almost a full blown panic attack.

*What if I have to kiss her? Is she going to think I'm a loser for never having kissed a girl before? For photo ops or whatever they call them. Holding hands is not that big a deal. My picture is going to be taken a thousand times... ten thousand times. It's all going to be fake.*

He continued his research once he'd calmed down and saw that sometimes she didn't really dress appropriately for her age, and sometimes especially when she was younger, she had way too much makeup on. He figured that was her handlers or PR team.

*Well, really... what have I got to lose? I don't have a girlfriend to get in trouble with, and if I did I wouldn't do it anyway. I don't have a summer job yet. The interview money alone is more than I'd make in my first year of any job. Who knows? Maybe some girl will feel sorry for me once the fake breakup is over and might want to go out with me. I'm not really that shy, but I'm not the Type A she is.*

Mike took a few deep breaths. "Ok. I'm gonna do it."

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“But it’s been under forty-five minutes, you said I had...” Mike argued.

“This is Hollywood baby, you snooze, you lose. They already found someone.”

Mike pretended to be dejected. “All that soul searching... looking for the perfect girl... I thought I had found her... and she’d pay me for my superb fakiness... but alas...” he threw his forearm across his eyes in a dramatic fashion... fame is so fleeting.”

Nancy laughed, but she could see that Mike was a little disappointed.

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“Mike... you awake?” Nancy had knocked on the door lightly. It was well after midnight.

“Yeah, I’m already a Hollywood has-been. I’m just pondering what could have been.”

“It’s still on if you are still interested.”

“What?!”

“Say the word, and a limo will be here in the morning to pick you up. Dress casual. But for god’s sake don’t wear shorts. Your legs can’t handle it... and neither can anyone’s eyes.”

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Two mean looking guys with dark suits and darker sunglasses, sat on each side of her in the limousine.

Across from Mike.

A PR person sat on one end of the bench seat, and on the other was... well, he was dressed and looked like a lawyer.

She looked at Mike with the prettiest brown eyes he was ever going to see in his lifetime. She wasn't wearing a lot of makeup and her hair cut to a pixie style. The most recent photos he'd seen of her she had a lob, or really long hair probably extensions, so this must be for a new project she was working on.

The PR guy said. "Is there any casual place you two can hangout and talk... half hour, hour, tops."

Mike directed them to a spot. "Where is this?" That was the lawyer guy, he looked around. They seemed to be in the middle of nowhere.

"Railroad tracks. You stay here, we walk thirty minutes on them, turn around and walk back. Agents J and K here can walk a few feet behind us. That work?"

Jane Ives burst out laughing, she turned to her PR guy, "I like him already."

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“Ok... what I like in a boyfriend is total honesty, and one that is kind and treats me right. Yes, I like good looks and,” she gave a much bigger sigh that made Mike wonder what she was really thinking, “you have that covered... times a thousand.”

“Um. Miss Ives?”

“I know, I know, you’ll be a fake boyfriend. But this has to look real. You’ll see what we want when you read the contract. Any questions you have right now?”

“May I ask why you... um... need a fake boyfriend?”

“You may not.” Her answer was perfunctory.

Mike should have paid more attention to the Shakespeare classes he’d had to take, but he knew. *That was foreshadowing, I get the distinct feeling this is not going to be a walk in the park. That’s why the pay is so high.*

“Noted.” Mike said. “Can you at least tell me why your lawyer is in the limo and mine isn’t?”

“The contract is *not* written in *lawyeresse*. I told my lawyer the contract had to be very understandable because this all needs to happen quickly. But let me be perfectly clear, you are *not* and *never will be* my boyfriend. Do I need to repeat myself?”

Mike shook his head. *Shit. I think this is the real Jane Ives.*

“Um... is there a bullshit clause? In case I’m tired of all the bullshit and walk away?”

She laughed. “Ok, you are making me like you more than I wanted to. Yes, to answer your question there is an out... but I will try, I will really try not to force you to use it.”

*Mike laughed inside. Yep, more foreshadowing.*

“I asked for honesty from you. That’s not a one way street, I will be brutally honest with you. I wanted someone who was a nobody. But you won’t be when this is all done. Will we be friends after this? No. I

will not give you any of my social media account names or friend you on any of them. You are going to do a job for me. Nothing more. None of that doesn't mean we can't have a good time... with contract limitations of course.

"Contract limitations?"

"Yes. Time to head back so you can see what you're getting into.

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Mike read the list.

One open mouth kiss.

One to two closed mouth kisses.

Six to twelve pecks on the cheek.

Unlimited situation appropriate shoulder or elbow touches.

Unlimited holding hands where required or requested.

No phone calls.

No text messages.

Fake social media contact. Accounts will be deleted upon termination or contract completion.

No informal talk between you and Miss Ives.

You will refer to Miss Ives as Miss Ives. Not by her first name.

No standalone interviews without entourage present.



All provided clothing, equipment, and any other accompaniments will be returned on termination or completion of the contract.

Under absolutely no circumstances will you acquire any personal attachment to Jane Ives. If this occurs, your contract will be immediately terminated. Contract and termination stipend will paid in full.

You will also not refer, indicate, suggest ,or hint any and kind of sexual relationship between Miss Ives. Payment becomes void with the additional stipulation that rape charges will apply.

He noticed that she was looking at her lap, not at him to see his reaction to reading the contract. She seemed to be a little embarrassed.

“Ok one point isn’t going to work if you *people* want to pull this off.” Mike said, he tried to make his emphasis on the word *people* sound sarcastic.

“Which one is that?”

“Calling or referring to your girlfriend as Miss Ives, isn’t going to work. You know... in the real world. Not the world of fantasy lawyers.”

She still wouldn’t meet his eyes, but she giggled.

The lawyer cleared his throat. “Ok, that makes logical sense. Let me strike that out and initial it.

“Ok then. This is what I expected. I’ll sign it.”

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“This is our waiver.”

Mike frowned. “On top of the contract?”

“I meant *our* waiver. This is not one of those we are absolved of any form of mental or physical harm that may come to you during the contract. Miss Ives was adamant that you and your family be compensated for any adverse or negative effects that you or your immediately family may incur.”

“Um... that’s really very thoughtful. Thank you Jane.”

This time she looked at him and smiled.

## 2. Baggage or Operation Mincemeat

“Can you get that for me?”

Jane was referring to her baggage.

“Well, what else would a loving boyfriend do? Even a fake one.”

“Do I need to get my lawyer to add a no sarcasm clause? Because I will fucking do it if it keeps your trap shut.”

*This is going to be the hardest money I ever make. I'm not going to have any problem complying with contract.*

“Actually that might not be a bad idea, because so far I'm not going to have any problems with the other clauses”

She stopped and looked at him. Her face was a mixed bag of emotions. Finally she said, “Sorry, that won't be necessary.” But it was clipped and... professional.

*This isn't even day one. This is hour one. It's the Money, Luke. The Money.*

Mike knew he was going to have to keep that in mind if he wanted to get through this.

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“Ok, we are setting up for how we meet, and for a scene in my new movie. I’ll meet you where you live.”

“Oh. I guess I don’t get a trailer.”

“You do. But not until we meet. Paparazzi are swarming all over the place. We’ll get you home so nobody knows. Here’s a cell phone. You don’t call me. I call you.”

*Shit. She’s cold. I don’t know what the hell is going on, but I have to keep thinking of that big money carrot, not the stick she’s going to beat me with every time she talks to me.*

*Can I put up with this for a year?*

*I can.*

*For mom.*

XXXXXX

“I’m coming over.”

*That sounded like a command. Not a request or even an idea. Mike did some deep breathing before he heard the heavy knock on the basement door.*

When Mike opened he sure if it was Goon in Black #1 or Goon in Black #2. He laughed to himself. GIB#1 and GIB#2. *I think I have to keep that to myself. Either way they still looked menacing.*

“I am ready to receive her oneness.” *I think sarcasm is totally lost on these two.*

They parted, and Jane Ives walked between them. She didn’t wait for any invite. She was dressed in sweater and jeans. No make up of any

kind.

*Her eyes are... she is still pretty. Too bad her heart is owned by corporations.*

She handed him a piece of paper. "This is a casting call. You are going to apply, and obviously be accepted."

"Ok."

"We are going to be shooting a highschool classroom scene with other extras. You may know them, you may not."

"Ok."

"In between scenes, we are going to talk. I'm going to fake laugh, maybe touch your arm, but I'm going to do it very... publicly. After all I *am* an actress. We will do this for a few times and you will... *pursue* me. You don't touch or talk to me or even *about* me at any other time. At some point you will ask me out on a date, I'll accept and we'll go to phase two. Clear?"

"Well, three minor quibbles."

"And those are? Her voice was haughty as if she couldn't believe her perfect plan... wasn't perfect.

"First. Not that I expected it, but it's clear that you haven't read Ben Macintyre's '*Operation Mincemeat*' that's kind of key to give you the second quibble. "

"Ok, what's that book about?"

"World War Two, it's about how the British created a fake person, to fool the Nazi's, in attempt to disguise the allied invasion of Sicily, nineteen-forty-three I think."

"What does *that* have to do with you being my fake boyfriend."

"Believability."

"You don't think I can act the part?" Mike could swear he saw her

nose lift a little into the air.

“Well, I haven’t watched any of your recent work, but I’m sure you can pull it off. I’m talking about my own believability.”

“You aren’t an actor, but I can coach you on some of the broader strokes.”

“You don’t want me talking about you, I assume not to my friends, who at some point are definitely going to ask.”

“Ok, if you can be convincing, go right ahead.”

“You don’t know this about me yet... and total, total honesty here... I kind of wear my emotions on my face.”

“That’s good!” She said delighted.

“No... not really... I don’t think there’s anyway I can pull off that I’m,” Mike enjoyed the airquote he made a little too much, “*pursue* a stuck up bitch who thinks her shit doesn’t stink. Oh... and she’s a famous celebrity slash model. Either way, no *feeling* involved.” *Singular. I wonder if she picked up on that.*

She stared at Mike with the best deadpan he’d ever seen.

“As the aforementioned stuck up bitch, why did you take this job on? Knowing you were going to be dealing with an entourage and all that shit?”

“Personal reasons. I can really use the work.”

“*What* personal reasons?”

“That was not in the contract. You don’t get to know my personal life. I’m sure you’ll have some shit to make up for interviews, but that won’t be in it.”

“Ok. Third *quibble*.” Jane said looking at him.

“The Internet. I know you’ve heard of it. Most people think the internet is Twitter, Instagram, the web in general, or god forbid,

Facebook. It's more, but my point is, people are going to dig into my life... and yours again. If they can't find what they want, they will make shit up. As you well know. You know how many fake naked pictures I've seen of you. With your head when you were... um... much, much younger. Probably qualifies as child porn. And now my face is going to be on a lot of those. Frankly the money your people are paying me, will never cover the damages to me or my family... but one step at a time. The devil is in the details. Read the book"

Mike very carefully did not include what he was thinking. *If you can read.*

"Ok, let me go get the contract amended and the waiver. You'll be compensated for any amendments."

She didn't even look at him when she left.

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Mike was sitting somewhere in an office in Hawkins.

Somewhere.

"Ok." Lawyer guy said. "These are the amendments to the contract, amendment fee as appropriate."

Mike read the changes. "Uh... are you guys serious?"

"What part are you having an issue with?"

"All of it."

"Well, then... let's tackle them one at a time."

"Let's group them... we'll start with the unlimited ones:

Unlimited mouth kisses.

Unlimited closed mouth kisses.

Unlimited affectionate pecks on the cheek.

Unlimited situation appropriate shoulder or elbow touches.

Unlimited holding hands where required or requested.

Unlimited phone calls.

Unlimited text messages.”

“You have a problem what that?” Lawyer guy said.

“I was more concerned for Miss Ives. If she’s uncomfortable with well, almost a one-eighty on the unlimteds, it won’t work.”

“You don’t want unlimited French kissing with a starlet?” Jane said, a crooked smile on her face.

Mike turned red, and she immediately said, “That was crass, I’m sorry Mike.”

“Why the change... um... change of heart?”

“I read that book.”

“Operation MIncemeat?”

“Yes. I can read you know.”

Mike’s shade of red went deeper. “Well, that explains the rest:

Your personal media accounts can be used if you promise to delete them when contract is finished.



Standalone interviews allowed if discretion is followed.

All provided clothing, equipment, and any other accompaniments may be kept at not cost.

Under absolutely no circumstances will you acquire any personal attachment to Jane Ives. If this occurs, your contract will be immediately terminated. Contract and termination stipend will paid in full.

“Ok. The rape charges were removed. Means I can have sex with the starlet?”

Jane turned beet red.

The lawyer guy cleared his throat. “I have been informed that we are dealing with two actual human beings. What they do behind closed doors, is of no concert to the public, their lawyers or the media. Here is our new waiver.”

“Um. Is that a typo?”

“No.” Jane said.

“But...”

“But nothing. No. That’s the new number.” She said.

Mike, his dad, his mom, Nancy, and even Holly would never have to work.

“Um... I don’t know what to say... this was the exact opposite to what I expected. Um... I really don’t know what to say.”

*Ah shit. I’m going to cry.*

When the floodgates opened, the lawyer left quickly and Jane came over and put a hand on his shoulder. “I do have at least one feeling,

Mike.”

She left the room also.

### 3. Bad Day At Work

Mike heard the tone of Jane's text message coming through.

Jane: *Why aren't you on set? We are waiting.*

Mike: *I'm told only authorized people are allowed on set.*

Jane: *Yes, and that sheet I gave you would have a Set Pass authorizing you.*

Mike took his share of glee in taking a photo of the casting call sheet, with a big red stamp on it saying: Void/Not Authorized and then sending it to her.

Seconds later the phone rang.

"I'll clear this up and have a pass waiting for you. Go down to the security area again. Now!" She hung up.

"Yes, your highness." Mike said, shaking his head and headed back to the set.

XXXXX

"Hi, I'm Mike Wheeler, there's... uh... supposed to be a set pass waiting for me here."

"Hmmm, Wheeler, Wheeler... " The girl looked down a sheet she had

on her clipboard. “Nope. No Mike Wheeler here. If you aren’t on the list, you don’t get a pass.” Mike watched her give a not so subtle glance to yet a third Goon In Black.

Mike shrugged and shook his head. “Ok..”

He turned around and walked back home.

XXXXXX

Jane: *How can I ask this politely? Where the fuck are you?!?*

Mike: *I’m at home. Again. Let me quote, ‘Not on the list, you don’t get a pass.’*

The phone rang again.

“You are *on* that list.”

“Well tell that to the Goon in Black, who the *Holder of Passes* was ready to give me the ‘fuck him up a little’ signal.” The sarcasm in Mike voice made it all the way through the air to Jane.

“I’ll meet you there. *Be fucking there.*”

XXXXXX

When Mike got there, Jane was standing there. She wasn’t smiling.

She turned to the girl with the clipboard. “Show him.”

“I’m sorry Mr. Wheeler, I seem to have made a mistake.”

“Yeah, interested when the star of the movie is here, it all got cleared up.”

“Ok, put the pass around your neck, once you are on set, put it in your pocket.”

They passed through security, and Jane led him to the script girl, She handed him another sheet of paper.

“When the director calls, *action* , you do whatever it says on the paper. Get that?”

Mike nodded. “This scene is short, but with the lost time, it’s probably the only one we are going to do today.”

XXXXX

“ACTION!”

Mike took a quick glance again at the paper. *Talk quietly to the student next to you.* That’s all it said. He was just a background character after all. The one that Jane Ives would develop a fake relationship with.

Mike turned to the guy whispered. “I don’t care if Steven Spielberg asks me to be in his next blockbuster. I’m not interested.”

Mike didn’t know the guy, but he’d seen him around in school. The guy didn’t say anything.

*Ok, that’s weird. I wonder if his sheet told him to ignore me or something.*

“CUT! For fucks sake CUT. Sound guy says some idiot back there is talking? Who the fuck is it? Better yet, why the fuck are you talking on my set? What the fuck does your sheet say?”

“It says talk to the student next to me. I was able to follow instructions. Turns out I can read.”

“It certainly doesn’t *not* fucking say that!”

Mike raised his voice, knowing he might blow his entire chances of keeping this job. “It certainly fucking *does* fucking say that asshat. If you can fucking read, I’ll fucking show it to you. Does that fucking work for you?”

Mike got up and walked toward him, “Read the fucking thing aloud.”

“Get the fuck off my set. You’re fired. I’m also going to fire the fucking idiot that hired you.”

Mike laughed. “Good luck with that.” No sooner had he said that then he was grabbed under the arms and carried out of the classroom and out the front door and tossed a few feet.

“If you are seen on set again, you’ll be charged with trespassing. Give me your pass.”

XXXXX

This time there was no text message. The phone rang.

Mike answered it, at first he wasn’t going to be he thought he might as well... “I guess you heard?”

“Heard what? We are doing the next scene and what a surprise you

aren't on set."

"I was fired."

"What!? Who the fuck fired you?"

"Some short guy who's in bad need of a big boy haircut. Told me to get the fuck off his set, and that I was fired. He was also going to fire whoever hired me. From what I understand, a director is a little bit of a Prima Donna."

"That was the AD. I thought you knew *I* was the director. You calling me a Prima Donna?"

"If the glass slipper fits... I could have really used this job... shit..."  
Mike hung up.

He went to sit in the back of the bus. "Sorry mom, guess the bills don't get paid next month." He said to himself.

XXXXX

Jane found him crying. She saw he tried to cover it up.

"I heard you talked back to that mouthbreather?"

"Yeah, but I got myself fired, and I think I got you fired too."

Jane threw back her head and laughed.

"What's so fucking funny? We are both out of work, you don't need the money but I do."

"I'm not out of a job... and neither are you."

"Uh, Jane... he *fired* me. I'm guessing he's higher up in the chain of

command for the movie. I don't know how big your part is, but I know they can recast... Hollywood does that all the time."

"I'm the executive producer, means I put serious money into this movie. I'm also the director, that's new for me, but I think I can pull it off. The guy who, " and then Jane airquoted, "fired you, was an AD."

"What's that?"

"Assistant Director, basically means he shoots B roll, or any scene the Prima Donna director thinks is beneath her."

*She's smiling at me. She's not mad at me?*

"I didn't mean to insult you..." Mike chuckled, "um... I kinda had a bad day at work. It seems like everyone was out to get me... have you ever had people in authority pour their derision on you for an entire day?"

"Yes I have."

"Ok, so you know how I feel... but you don't... but you don't know why I..." Mike couldn't help it and burst out crying.

"I know why."

"No you don't."

"I do. And I want to be completely honest with you. It's all paid for. Everything. You can stay fired if you want, but I really do need you as a fake boyfriend."

"You don't understand Miss Ives."

"Ok" She interrupted. "Don't call me *Miss Ives*. And don't call me *Jane*."

"Oh, we are back to the original contract are we?"

"Jane Ives is just my stage name. Call me El."



“Elle?”

“E-L as in short for Eleven. Long story. Not telling you.”

“Ok... um... El... um why are you being nice to me?”

El gave him a big sigh.

“I probably wouldn’t like this as a real boyfriend... would I?”

“But you’re going to be a fake boyfriend, so yes you will.”

“Doesn’t really work that way El. Remember you want me convincing, if I don’t, I don’t know... like it ? ... I’m not an actor... how can I pull that off? I don’t even know what this big controversy is supposed to be.”

“I’m eighteen, I want to have a nude scene in the movie... with you... there will be a corresponding photo layout in Playpen magazine.”

“Ah... I get it. With the two previous boyfriend disasters, you want me to take the heat off this. Ok, I’m assuming that I’m not going to be nude, so it’s just you.”

“That’s it exactly.”

Mike was quiet.

“You don’t approve.”

“Fake boyfriend is supposed to act real. No I don’t... but you are paying me... so I guess I have to... I need the money.”

“No you don’t. I told you everything is paid for.”

“I don’t think you understand.”

“Your mom got terminal breast cancer. Double mastectomy. You’re dad couldn’t handle it, killed himself in front of your sister. No house payments. Skyrocketing medical bills, no college fund for either your older sister Nancy, you, or your younger sister Holly. Does that sum it

up?”

Mike's sobbing made him unintelligible. El hugged him, "It is all paid for. Everything."

It was a long time before he had settled down... "How do you know all that? And why would you do all of that? Not for me. For your career? A nude scene is that important to you?"

"My name is El Hopper. My dad told me what I needed to know. I told him about my fake boyfriend plan and that you had accepted. He didn't like the fake boyfriend idea, when he found out it was you he said... "Don't do that to him. You don't know what he's been through. Well, now I do."

Mike shrugged.

"Somebody once said there's no such thing as bad publicity. Not in Hollywood anyway."

"You're about to get a ton of it."

"I know."

"You are doing all of that... *and* I get to see you naked. In real life, on pause for three minutes or so... and in a magazine."

It was El's time to turn red.

"I need to get to know you. I'm scared to death."

"That is the first human thing you've said to me."

She couldn't meet his eyes.

"Let's walk to my house. Hold hands. Maybe some photos will be taken, but we'll get used to faking it. We have to start somewhere."

"Good. You are on board. We don't hold hands until we get to where people are."

*Bitch mode enabled. Fuck. She's good. No wonder she can act.*

Mike couldn't leave it at that.

"Nobody knows who really said it, but the quote is something like *The most important thing in Hollywood slash acting slash stage is honesty. Once you learn to fake that you've got it made.* You Miss Ives have perfected it. You hold your end. You'll have a fake boyfriend.

"Good. We are on the same page." She said.

"A so very fucking Fake Boyfriend, I should be stand at the podiums when you accept your award."

Mike was disgusted with her.

He would put up with her though.

For Mom.

## 4. Gall and Gullibility

When Mike didn't show up for the next scene he was in, he knew he would hear from Jane.

Jane: *Ok, What's your excuse today?*

Mike: *Oh, I don't know... today I thought I'd go to my mom's funeral?*

XXXXX

Mike felt guilty, but not that surprised that he wasn't crying at the funeral. In fact he was relieved, so was Nancy and to some extent Holly was as well. Their mother's illness had been stressful on top of everything else.

His mom had been active in social circles, but her involvement was much broader than Mike had realized. A lot of people had come to pay their respects. He was a little choked up, but proud that his mom had so many people who cared. All of Mike's friends showed up too, they had all sat at the dinner table with his family.

Her face was covered with a black veil, but Mike would have recognized the eyes behind it anywhere.

She came up to him and gave him a warm hug. He whispered into her ear. "Are you serious right now? This is not a good time for a photo op. You are a real piece of work, you know that?" She had her hair done up in a tight bun. He never thought it looked good. Too

severe. For him anyway.

“I am here to support you Mike. I never got to know mama. I don’t even know who my real father is. You have been blessed with knowing both of yours. I made sure no paparazzi followed me. It would have been inappropriate. I cancelled the shoot for today.”

“You can do that?” Mike whispered. People were starting to leave, Jane took his hand and walked with him.

“A girl can do anything she wants. One in my position especially. I have a platform and I want to use it. I want to be a role model to young women out there.”

“By getting naked? I’m seeing a conflict of interest here.”

Jane stopped walking. “I just want to be known as a good director and actor.”

“Directing yourself naked is one thing. Tastefully naked is another. Not naked, and you are still a director. I don’t understand why actresses think that getting naked for ‘*the story*’ is actually good for the story.” Mike felt embarrassed to say it, but he did anyway, “Something as simple as showing your panties falling from your thighs to your ankles, shows just your legs conveys so much more than naked simulated sex on a sofa or in a bed, would show. It implies it. One of the things they still use in movies is a couple smoking in bed. That used to mean they just had sex. It didn’t have to be shown, it was implied. A lot of that kind of thing doesn’t mean anything to younger people, but it does to movie fans.”

“I should have thought of that. I don’t think I’m going to be a very good director.”

“Do something original.”

“Like what?” She said.

Mike had decided that he didn’t want to hold her hand anymore. He let go. “If I told you or even suggested something it wouldn’t be yours and you wouldn’t be happy with it even if you did use it. But I can give you an example. Shit! Was that a flash? Well there’s your photo

op.”

Mike hadn't been paying much attention while they were talking, but he found himself in front of a trailer near the school. "This is my stop. Do you want to hide? Avoid any more flashes?"

"Yeah."

XXXXXX

"Have a seat. I'm going to change."

Mike was still in his charcoal grey suit but he didn't mind. She came out of her bedroom wearing pink track pants and a pink halter top thingy that showed off her midriff.

She was in good shape.

"Want something to drink?"

"No thanks, I'm not going to be here long." She saw her shoulders slump a little.

"You don't like me much do you?"

Mike shrugged, "From what I've seen so far? Not really. I'm in this for the money... and besides it was in the contract I assigned. I'm not supposed to develop any kind of attachment to you. Well, check, no problem there."

She frowned. "I had the lawyer put that in... I was a different person then."

"Jane, that was five days ago." Mike shrugged again, "It was nice of you to be at the funeral. I was not expecting that. At first I thought

you were doing it because it's a great fake boyfriend opportunity."

"I knew that's how it would look. That's my fault. I really was there for support."

"Is it true you didn't get to know your mom?"

Jane nodded. "Mike... I... did something you might not like."

"Just one thing?" Mike smirked at her. He stopped when she looked down. *She's serious.*

"I went around and talked to your friends."

"I hope they said good things about me."

"Max is a bit of a firecracker, but she said even though you two didn't hit it off right away she knew you were a good person. She'd said she'd defend you to her death."

Mike looked sharply at Jane. "Max said that?"

Jane nodded. "She thinks you just put up with her because of Lucas."

"It was like that at first... wow... can't believe she said that. Maybe I've been misjudging people too harshly."

"I want to tell you something Mike... but I don't want you to think I had some writer make it up and that I'm just acting out a scene. I know a lot about you now... I want you to know about me."

"Under this hair I'm all ears."

XXXXX

It was four or five in the morning before Jane finished her story.

“So you want me to call you El now?”

El nodded... “I would prefer that... yes.”

“Ok El. Well. Congratulations. There is no way that there aren't guys with expensive telephoto lenses ready to snap pictures as soon that trailer door opens. They are going to think I spent the night. So that part of your plan worked.

“You don't believe me?”

Mike watched her saucer eyes widen in her own disbelief. “As Max would probably say, great story, a little derivative in parts, but you Miss Ives are a great actress. Don't let anybody tell you different. Oh! Did you know the word *gullible* is not in the dictionary?”

Mike got up to leave but found he couldn't stand.

And then he felt the pain. “So it's true... you are hurting me.”

The pain stopped immediately.

Mike got up, and went for the trailer door, as soon as he opened it, El came up to him and planted a kiss on his mouth. “There, I think they got the photo they wanted, and you are now starting to fulfill your contract. I would ask you to keep what I told you... quiet?”

*She looks so pretty when she's being honest...* Mike gave her a slow nod, “Yeah, you don't need the shitstorm that would come from that information getting out. I wouldn't do that to you... Ja... uh, El.”

“Different parts of the storyboard are being filmed tomorrow, you aren't needed. But you can be on set if... you want to do some of the fake boyfriend... actions.”

*By actions, she means kissing or something.*

Mike sighed. “I guess I better earn my pay.”

When the trailer door closed behind him, Mike could have sworn he



heard heavy sobs... but barely just before a TMZ mic was in his face.  
“Did you just fuck Jane Ives?”

Goons number one to five were on him in an instant. *Let the shitshow begin.*

XXXXX

“Jane Ives has a new boyfriend, girls! And he’s gorgeous! You’ll have to go back to wait your turn!”

- - Pop Culture Magazine

“Jane Ives gets studded by some small town hick! I found this out before excessive force was used against me.”

- - TMZ

“Trouble on the set of Jane Ives’ new movie. Rumours abound, but the biggest is that she will do a simulated sex scene with an unknown actor.”

- - New Movies Magazine

“Ugh, I hate the term *new boyfriend*. He’s my boyfriend. Period. And if you must know, yes, we are very much in love.

- - Excerpt from Interview with Jane Ives

XXXXXX

*Well, that didn’t take long.* Mike was on his computer looking at images of he and El at the funeral, her kissing him at the door of her trailer, them holding hands on the way to the trailer. It didn’t seem like any photo op had been missed.

*She lied to me. She said there was no photo op at the funeral. Hollywood stars and their egos. Film at 11. Mike laughed to himself at the ironic pun.*

XXXXXX

Mike knew he wasn’t going to be called to the set the next day... or the day after... or the day after that. He decided to hang out on the set anyway.

Much to his surprise, everyone was nice to him.

*Ok. That’s new. I wonder what’s going on?*

El saw him from behind a camera, she was pretty and all smiles. She came up to him and gave him a kiss.

*Mmm, her lips are soft.*

“Hi sweetie. I have something to show you.” She took him to another trailer that had satellite dishes on it, and seemed to be heavily... *teched up*. That was the best description Mike had for it.

*Mmm, she called me sweetie. Why do I feel warm and fuzzy all of the sudden? Danger Mike Wheeler danger. Do. Not. Get. Attached. To. Jane. Ives. It's all an act... remember that. You will thank yourself later.*

“What am I going to see?”

“Dailies. My sex scene.” She giggled.

Mike stopped walking, “Uh... no I’m not.” He was about to turn around and go home, when she put her hand on his arm.

“It’s not what you think, Mike. Give me a chance.”

XXXXXX

[They were walking towards a house, holding hands]

*She's not holding his hand the way she holds mine.*

[When the male actor talked, the camera was from behind. You couldn't see the girl's face. When she talked, the camera was focused on her tight jeans. From behind. The scene went back and forth like that until the couple reached the bedroom]

*She's keeping the characters anonymous, like they are just two unknown*

*people. It doesn't matter who they are at this point, they are going to have sex. The focusing on her bum makes that obvious.*

[The next scene, he is in bed, obviously naked, and she is standing beside it. The camera is from behind once again, but at her thighs, not showing her bum. A rustling sound, and white panties slither to her knees, she wriggles her legs and they fall to her ankles.]

*Ok, that's very erotic, good job on that one El.* El leaned over, and whispered to him "I stole your idea."

"Yes, but the lead up to it is very good."

"Ok, next scene takes place about halfway through the movie. Up to this point you haven't seen her face, but now the camera is focused on my mouth as I smile or cry, and that will transition to any dialog."

"Ah, she's slowly becoming a real person, someone to care about in the movie."

El turned to him, put her arms around him and kissed him. "Yes" She whispered into his ear. "I'm slowly becoming a real person."

A flash went off.

Someone called out, "It's for the extras on the DVD."

XXXXXX

They sat in her trailer.

"I'm impressed. I mean I haven't seen every single movie out there,

but that directing technique is fresh to me. It really does convey what you wanted. And you didn't have to take off your clothes?"

"That was a body double. The shot of my ass in jeans, was me. But the panty shot isn't."

"I've been really shitty to you. Sorry."

"I gave you plenty of reason."

"Sooo... if you aren't doing a nude scene, you don't really need a fake boyfriend?"

El lowered her head. Shook her head slowly.

Mike took off his set pass and gave it to her... "Unless... you still need me for scenes?"

She looked up at him, there were tears in her eyes.

"I still need you.

## 5. Being A Real Girl

### Notes for the Chapter:

This chapter/ending was meant to be an emotional roller coaster. At least that was my intention :)

*That is one flaky chick. Must not be going well in LA-LA land. She gave me back the set pass, but didn't give me any idea what the shooting schedule was.*

Mike shrugged. *Hollywood people.*

The script girl saw him walking and ran up to him, "Mr. Wheeler? How would you like some lines?"

"Um, wouldn't I have to have a script for that? And don't the various organizations have rules? And the big question, I know I'm no longer getting shit on by every single member of the crew now, but... I don't know why, and now I'm getting lines? I was a background character."

"It's all been cleared, the girl said. Everyone thought that nude and sex scene came from her new boyfriend. Miss Ives gathered us all up and ripped us a new one, said she was rewriting that scene and had a follow up scene."

"Ok... that actually explains a lot."

"You will be paid scale as required, not even Jane Ives can change the SAG slash AFTRA rules. If you are wondering if you will be tooling around in a Porsche after filming is done... the answer is probably *no*."

*She obviously doesn't know what El has done for my family anyway. I'll*

*keep quiet about that.*

“Here’s *your* copy of the script, your lines are on page forty-seven.”

XXXXX

Mike really didn’t have any interest in the movie. To him it was what they called a chick flick. If he had lines though, he should probably read the script.

*Ok, this isn’t bad. Not my thing, but she can really write a script. I’d watch this with my girlfriend.... Ha! ...if I had one.*

When he got to page forty-seven, he noticed on the opposite blank page that there was a phone number. Below it was the name *Tina*.

He called her. “Hi... um, this is Mike Wheeler... may I speak to Tina?”

“Speaking.”

“I got the number right then.”

“You did... did you want me for anything?”

“I want you for a whole lot of things. Let’s start with... um coffee?”

“Ok!” She sounded very happy, “I’ll meet you at the food court in the mall? Around where the Starbucks is?”

“I’ll be there.” Mike said and hung up.

XXXXXX

“Let’s not talk about my boss.” Tina said.

“Done. You are the first girl who’s actually been interested in me... um... for me, I guess.”

“So the fake boyfriend shit is over?”

“The fake boyfriend shit is over. I feel a little guilty over what I was compensated for but...”

“I heard you just lost your mom?”

Mike nodded. Tina turned to him while they waited on their coffees. She gave him a warm hug.

Mike wiped his eyes. “Thanks... that felt... honest...”

“So will this...” She leaned forward and kissed him on the mouth.

XXXXXX

“Give me your phone.” Jane Ives was not happy with Mike Wheeler.



She tapped away on the screen, saw what she wanted and threw the phone at Mike's chest, his reflexes were good, he caught it. He looked at the screen. It was a photo of Tina kissing him.

Mike shrugged, "That was the most honest kiss I've had. If Jane Ives learns to fake that, she can have as many fake boyfriends as she wants."

"I told you I no longer need a fake boyfriend."

"Yes... so what's the problem? Believe me, I appreciate what you've done for my family... but really... it was no skin of your nose. You have the money, it was hardly a sacrifice. If you want me to pay you back... well... it will take me years. You know that. If you are going to hold that over my head then I was right about you... and probably everyone who has money to throw around. TMZ said I was a small town hick." Mike humphed and quoted. '*We are very much in love.*' Yeah right. I almost felt something when you said that. You are very good. I'm sure you have people that will give you the right spin on that photo... speaking of which, shooting day is over... I have a date"

When Mike closed the trailer door behind him, he was sure he could hear crying again.

XXXXX

Mike looked at the text on his personal phone. It was a hotel room number with the words. "Meet me there."

XXXXXX

Tina couldn't have been much older than he was, but she was drunk as a skunk as she opened up the hotel room door. She was wearing a bathrobe, but hadn't bothered to close it up. There were no secrets she left.

"Whad da fug are you doon here?"

"You said to meet you here."

"Shid happened. Fug ov."

"You are upset. Can I help?"

"I dunno... can you go fug yerself? Thad help."

"Tina, you are underage... I mean, I'm not stupid, I know someone could get you liquor but..."

Mike looked over at the hotel desk and chair hotel's have for "correspondence" he saw the Roman numeras for III... in white powder.

"Are you coked up?"

"No... I waz sgared to..."

"Well, don't do it. Drunk... I dont' care, stupid age limit for drinking

that nobody in this country follows, old greyy haired guys haven't figured that out yet. If you go anywhere near that," Mike pointed to the powder. "The don't come anywhere near me."

She started to cry. "I was fired."

"Yeah. I have a good idea why and who did it. Come with me."

XXXXXX

It was 3:30 in the morning when Mike pounded on Jane Ives trailer door.

She opened it up, in pink pajamas and sleepy eyed. Her eyes went wide when she saw who Mike had with him.

"You brought her here?! She's no longer a crew member. You have five seconds to say something before I call security."

"Try being a real girl for at least five minutes in your entire fucking life."

Mike was now in the presence of two girls crying... over him... if he had to guess.

XXXXXX

“I’m sorry Miss Ives...” Tina apologized.

“Fuck that noise,” Mike said. “You have nothing to apologize for. Miss *Ives* , here was being a vindictive bitch. She can’t have a fake boyfriend, so now I can’t have a real girlfriend.”

“Wha...?” Tina looked up at Jane.

Tina looked back and forth between El and Mike. “I didn’t know you two were together? Why did you agree to go out with me? I can see you two... are... in love. I’m not going to be the girl who gets between that.”

She got up and left.

“Wake up whoever you need to to get her job back. Maybe get her some help. Also you have a drug dealer on the set. You should fix that, but you should be in bitch mode when you do. Here’s the pass. I’m not an actor.”

Mike didn’t throw the pass at her, he just put it on the nearest flat surface and left.

XXXXX

*Even with bags under her eyes she’s still pretty.* Mike opened the door for El and let her in the basement. She’d been crying all night.

“I quit.” She said, walked over to sit on the sofa.

“Quit what?”

“Everything.”

“So you’re a quitter?” Mike expected a tirade of profanity.

“I stop doing things that don’t make me happy. Show,” she airquoted, “ ‘business’ is not making me happy anymore. Pretentious modeling isn’t either. The stress is bad, not Hawkins lab bad, but bad enough. I alienated my dad with my attitude. That hurts more than you can imagine. Turns out I can’t control my own set. Drugs are a problem now... was I that much of a bitch?”

Mike shook his head. “Don’t do by me. I was just angry. Don’t Hollywood people stay hunkered down out of the public eye when they need to.”

She cringed when Mike referred to her as *Hollywood people* .

“Just lay low for awhile.”

“Believe or not, I was pressured into doing the nude scene with a followup layout in that magazine. They were going to pay me a *lot* of money. I think I threw up every night reading it.”

She shivered, “Pretend grinding against some guy I don’t know but can’t spell his own name? No thanks.”

“Isn’t that the biz now for actresses?”

“Not this girl.”

“Um... if that’s your decision, I’d think you’d sound and look a lot happier... um, you look like you’ve been crying all night.”

“Between that and puking... I have... and a lot of it was at the same time.”

“El... um. What’s the real problem? It’s not Tina is it?”

“She has her job back, and we’ve offered help... and the drug dealer was that asshole AD. So I solved three problems all with one phone

call. Those guys you call *goons in black* are very good at their job.”

“Speaking of which... um... why aren’t they standing in the room with us.”

“I told you. I quit. The one thing happened I never expected.”

Mike waited.

“I met this really nice guy, he insulted me, questioned my whole attitude, the business, but he was gracious when I helped him out... and then... and then.”

And then the tears started. “I fell in love with him. Even Tina thought we were together. She thought we might have been having a fight and that’s why you asked her out... but I know that’s not you. Don’t ask me how I know... I know.”

“What do you want El?”

“Are you asking to be polite or do you *really* want to know?”

“I really want to know.”

“I’ve been doing this for half my life. But now... I want to be a real girl. With a real boyfriend. Is that even possible? With you?”

“We should go on real dates first.” Mike said, “That means outside with a ton of flashes going off, but ignoring them. You’ll be in the entertainment news cycle for a while, but it will peter out.”

El nodded.

“It means holding hands in public... it means, maybe some kissing during those dates. I wouldn’t expect... um...” Mike was flustered.

“...to sleep with me... that’s what you mean?”

“Uh, um, yeah, I didn’t mean to imply that.”

She smiled. “Let me ease your mind. We can sleep together anytime you want. Going slow in a relationship is... nice... but so is hot,

steamy, heavy breathing sex. Not that I would know.”

Mike laughed. “Me either. Um... ok... would you like to go out with me tonight. Just here. We’ll order a pizza and watch one of your movies?”

“We will *not* watch *any* of my movies.”

“Ok, old black and white monster movie then?”

“Ok... if you throw in... maybe some kissing... you have a date.”

“I get to kiss Jane Ives for real.”

“I get to kiss Mike Wheeler for real.”